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Elections to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other elections: election of fifteen members of the Human Rights Council

Letter dated 15 April 2008 from the Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

It gives me great pleasure to inform you that Pakistan has announced its candidature for the Human Rights Council for the term 2008-2011 in the elections to be held in May 2008.

The candidature of Pakistan for the Human Rights Council is a reflection of its deep commitment to the cause of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

In the context of Pakistan's candidature to the Human Rights Council, and in accordance with the provisions of General Assembly resolution 60/251, I am enclosing a record of the voluntary pledges and commitments made by Pakistan for the promotion and protection of human rights (see annex).

(*Signed*) Munir Akram

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Annex to the letter dated 15 April 2008 from the Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

Contribution, commitments and voluntary pledges of Pakistan to promote human rights

In accordance with General Assembly resolution 60/251

Pakistan has decided to present its candidature for re-election to the Human Rights Council (HRC) for one of the four (4) Asian seats for the term 2008-20011, elections for which will be held in May 2008.

In accordance with the provisions of General Assembly Resolution 60/251, following is a brief of Pakistan's contribution, voluntary pledges and commitments to promote human rights:

Contribution to the promotion of human rights

- Pakistan played a leading role in the establishment of the Human Rights Council as a body that should promote dialogue, cooperation, capacity building and technical assistance for the promotion of human rights with due regard to historic, cultural and religious values of Member States and their specific socio-economic conditions.

- As a founding member of the Human Rights Council, Pakistan has worked hard, in collaboration with other members, to provide a firm and consensual basis in creating the new architecture of the Human Rights Council. Through effective coalition building, Pakistan played a constructive role in the first year of the Council and helped craft critical agreements on Modalities of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR); Review of the System of Special Procedures and Review of Confidential Complaint Procedure (1503);

- The Pakistan delegation actively contributes to the work of the Council through its knowledge of human rights issues, norms, standards, as well as of the intricate history of the agreements that now form the foundation of the work within the Council.

- Pakistan continues to serve as the chair of the OIC Working Group on Human Rights in Geneva (Pakistan is also the current chair of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers). In this respect, Pakistan has endeavoured to overcome the divergences and misunderstandings that have appeared in approach of the Islamic World and the West. To this

end, Pakistan has been a part of all major initiatives to promote inter-cultural dialogue and harmony among diverse societies and cultures and has run resolutions in the General Assembly and the Human Rights Council to promote inter-religious and inter cultural cooperation for peace.

Progress on past pledges and future commitments

- Pakistan has fulfilled most of its pledges made at the time of its election to the Human Rights Council in 2006. The Federal Cabinet has decided to (a) ratify the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, (b) sign the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and (c) sign the Convention against Torture. The ratification and signature formalities are being finalized.

- The establishment of Pakistan's National Human Rights Commission is on the anvil.

- Pakistan is already a party to the International Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD), International Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), and to the core ILO Conventions 100, 138, 182 and 111. Pakistan is also a signatory to Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and to the two optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

- Special attention is being given to the social and economic emancipation of women and protection of the rights of other vulnerable groups including children and minorities. Human rights mass awareness campaigns through media & education programme have been launched to promote respect and observance of human rights in the society.

- Pakistan has remained a consistent supporter of the Human Rights Council and firmly believes in its importance as a major body of the United Nations Human Rights system. Pakistan was amongst the first countries to support the *Universal Periodic Review* mechanism as an innovation for the Council to examine human rights globally and effectively and to eliminate concerns about selectivity. Pakistan will be among the first countries to be reviewed in the UPR process.

- **Pakistan has repeatedly underscored the critical role played by the human rights special procedure system.**
- **Pakistan also supports the active role of civil society and the Non-Governmental Organizations in the work of the Council.**
- **Pakistan is committed to ensuring that the Council is empowered to make full use of its potential.**
- **If re-elected to the Human Rights Council for the term 2008-2011, Pakistan would continue to make its active contribution to the normative and operational work of the Human Rights Council and would support activities aimed at promoting the highest standards of human rights in other fora.**